



Proper planning can make garden attractive to birds

A garden is particularly lovely if it is filled with birds.

How do you attract birds to your garden?

It isn't necessary to set up bird feeders, although they will definitely attract birds. Many trees, vines, shrubs and flowers will encourage birds to set up housekeeping in your yard by offering them shelter, nesting spots, and natural foods.

With a little planning you can attract a variety of both native and migratory birds.

Some plantings will offer the birds protective cover and places to nest. Pine and

spruce trees are particularly attractive to birds for this reason, but they also like Russian olive, fir, beach and junipers.

Many birds like the berries produced by hawthorns, holly, cotoneasters, pyracanthus, snowberry, privet, barberry, Japanese yew, daylily, snapdragon, Virginia creeper, mountain ash and blackberry.

They also like elderberries, but these plants are hard to control in a domestic garden.

Plants like zinnias, marigolds and sunflowers that produce seeds are popular with some kinds of birds.



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Rough-barked trees like weeping willows usually harbor insects that provide a feast for the birds that live on bugs and seeds.

Birds are also wonderful for keeping down the aphid population.

Hummingbirds like trumpet vines, weigela, honeysuckle, red salvia, snapdragon, daylily, coral bells, penstemon, globe thistle, false dragonhead (physostegia), lupine, monarda, phlox, hollyhock, flowering quince, and many other blossoming flowers and vines. These busy little birds are particularly attracted by

red flowers, but they'll accept other colors too.

If you don't plan to harvest the fruit yourself, plums, cherries and crab apples offer good snacks for the birds.

If you plan to design your garden to attract birds, go easy on the pesticides. Recent studies have resulted in a ban on diazinon (one of the most popular garden chemicals) for use on golf courses and turf farms. The chemical is extremely toxic to birds, which absorb the material through their feet.

Also, provide some water source, such as a birdbath,

but make sure it is in a good location, sheltered from wind and inaccessible to cats and squirrels.

If you do decide to install a feeder, make sure you maintain it continuously. Don't start it, then stop about the time the birds get to depend on that source of food supplement.

If you make a place for them, they'll reward you by helping keep the harmful insect population down, to say nothing of many hours of birdwatching pleasure and song.